



## Growth Group Discussion Questions

### 10. Love like your Father

#### Read Matthew 5:27-32

1. Every culture is a 'plausibility structure'. A 'plausibility structure' is system of values held by a particular culture where certain things are believed without question. These beliefs are taken as self-evidently true with no need for argument. In a Western Secular culture (i.e. Australia) some examples might be, "Everyone is entitled to their opinion" or "Sexual expression is a matter of personal choice" or "Be true to yourself". Jesus refers to this kind of belief in first century Judaism when He says in verse 27, "You have heard that it was said..." ***Discuss on what grounds you believe that Jesus has the right to challenge every culture at every point. To what extent do Christians unconsciously take on the values and beliefs of the culture they are part of? How do we escape the beliefs our culture imposes on us according to Romans 12:2? What's so dangerous about thinking like our culture?***
2. ***How would you describe what Jesus means by 'lustful intent' in your own words?***
3. ***Discuss whether you think Jesus is going overboard with what He says in verse 29-30.***
4. ***Discuss how the gospel of Jesus Christ shows us how God is a Perfect Lover and that everything we have in Him corresponds perfectly to our deepest needs. 1 John 4:7-11 may be helpful.***
5. Each Growth Group can decide how best to answer the following questions, either split up into ladies and men's groups, or in even smaller groups or whatever is helpful and comfortable for the group members:
  - a. ***Pray for the sexual purity of our marriages in accordance with Hebrews 13:4***
  - b. ***Pray against the pervasive influence of our culture on our sexuality***
  - c. ***If there are singles, pray that through the gospel, we can be strengthened in grace to resist sexual expression in opposition to God.***
  - d. ***If there are younger people in the Group, perhaps discuss whether and why you think it is ok or isn't ok to watch nudity in movies, like Game of Thrones etc.***
  - e. ***Pray against the scourge of pornography. Will "Christians" who continue with pornography still go to heaven? How does Revelation 21:8 help with the answer?***

## **Leaders Notes**

INTRODUCTION: Obviously this is a sensitive study. It may be helpful to consider the dynamic of your Growth Group carefully. Are there single people, divorced people or just married couples? Depending on the make-up of your group, be selective of the questions. It may also be helpful to split the group up at certain points – into girls and guys and talk through some of the issues. Perhaps. Because of the content, some studies are more about practical application than mind formation. This is one such study.

1. Jesus is God. He has the right (and good reason) to challenge each and every culture on earth. No culture, not even first century Judaism is off-limits to Jesus' critique. Christians, like everyone else, constantly imbibe the surrounding culture. We need to keep going back to God's Word to free us from culture-shaped thinking. The danger of thinking like our culture is that we can't hear the Bible properly. We judge everything the Bible says through the mental grid of our culture. So for example, Jesus says men and women are completely equal but they have different roles. Some Christians struggle with this idea, not because of the Bible, but because our surrounding culture thinks that whatever a man ought to do a woman should be able to do also, and vice versa. Christians who struggle with different roles for men and women may not even realise that their thinking is not biblical but worldly.
2. 'Lustful intent' may be described as 'over-desire'. This is when you are controlled by a desire that is essentially selfish. Desire is actually good and God made us with desires. But when we take desire and we free it from all godly constraints of love, God, worship and the good of others, it becomes twisted and evil.
3. Jesus always views eternity as worth any sacrifice in this short life – after all, He sacrificed everything to win eternity for us! It is hard for us Christians to keep eternity in mind. Besides, evil desires start hell within us now. Ask any alcoholic or drug addict what hell addiction brings. You love something, you desperately want something, but you hate it and it makes you miserable at the same time. This is the beginnings of hell. And your desires have trapped you there.
4. Consider how perfectly God loves us. He loved us when we didn't love Him. So, He loved us with absolutely no gain for Himself. Then, He gave. And not just stuff either. He gave Himself. Fully and completely. Jesus died as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. By dying for us, Jesus was giving us life! Jesus desperately desired us – not for His gain, or His life, but for our gain and our life! Then, His death washed away our sins. He died to make us beautiful. Lust is about wanting something we think is already beautiful. God loved us when we were ugly in order to make us beautiful! And of course, His commitment is total. 'Until death us do depart' – how true this was of God! And now we experience extreme intimacy with God as He, by His Spirit, lives within us. A Christian who communes with God realises that fellowship with God is more intimate, more satisfying than sex. And, that when we are in a right relationship with God, sex itself becomes more intimate and more satisfying.
5. No answers needed.